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World Chronicle

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GUEST: **Lt.-Gen. MANFRED EISELE**
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PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Lt.-Gen. MANFRED EISELE, Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Support in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, reflects on a wide range of issues related to the different aspects of peace-keeping operations. He assesses the success and failures of the different United Nations peace-keeping operations from Somalia to Bosnia and Herzegovina. General Eisele details how the world organization assembles and deploys a peace-keeping force upon the approval of the Security Council and the parties concerned. He believes that the Blue Helmets will continue to play a major role in keeping the peace around the world.

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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

Never before in its history has the United Nations been involved in so many peace-keeping operations. Today there are more than a dozen operations authorized by the Security Council in different parts of the world. Thousands of civilians and tens of thousands of troops serve under the flag of the world organization, sometimes under difficult circumstances and in dangerous areas. How does the United Nations assemble these troops and provide them with logistical support?

Our guest today is in a unique position to reflect on the ways and means the international community uses to carry out its peace-keeping obligations. He is Lieutenant-General Manfred Eisele, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Support in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

Joining me to talk with General Eisele are Trevor Rowe of National Public Radio and Emiko Tate of NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation. General Eisele, welcome to World Chronicle.

EISELE: Thank you.

LITTLEJOHNS: General, is it becoming increasingly difficult, or is it perhaps becoming easier to assemble troops for peace-keeping operations? Are governments more forthcoming? Does it depend on the degree of risk that they perceive in the operation?

EISELE: Certainly it has never been easy for the United Nations to assemble forces. But we can say that two more recent missions have been over-subscribed, meaning we could make a selection out of the national contributions that were offered to us, those two missions being Haiti and Angola.

LITTLEJOHNS: And what about the financial aspects? Do these governments who provide troops charge the United Nations costs for their contribution, or does the UN have to pay out of its own budget?

EISELE: The United Nations has to reimburse nations after a certain set of regulations for the troops that they're providing. And the nations will be assessed contributions, irrespective of whether they contribute or not, according to their capabilities, based on their national wealth and income.

LITTLEJOHNS: Financial compensation for the forces of various countries must differ considerably. Does the UN have a sort of standard rate that the troops are paid, or are they paid on the same basis as they would be if they were serving on duty in their own countries?

EISELE: That is a very difficult issue, and we are about to develop a set of rules that is easing the rather complicated field of regulations that we have been dealing with in past missions. We've tried to develop a yardstick which can be applied in all future missions, irrespective of the type of equipment that a country would provide.

TATE: General Eisele, in the United States the Republicans have the Contract with America, which states that the U.S. should be reimbursed for all of the equipment and services it provides for peace-keeping operations. If this were to pass, how would this affect the planning in your offices for future peace-keeping operations? And do you think that this would have some kind of domino effect in other countries following suit?

EISELE: Generally, any nation contributing to UN peace-keeping operations is entitled to reimbursement following the standards that I have just mentioned, which are under review. And certainly the United States, when providing troops, will be reimbursed. However, there is discussion going on as to which troops are actually being counted -- whether the sailors aboard a carrier sailing off the coast of a mission area also belong to the peace-keeping operation or not. And if the United States wishes to be reimbursed for voluntary contributions which do not count under the proper peace-keeping mission rule, then we would find ourselves at the end of peace-keeping, because our budget would be empty.

TATE: So what kind of example is this, for a permanent member of the Security Council, in your opinion?

EISELE: Altogether, we think that the funding rules and regulations for peace-keeping have to be reconsidered, and we hope that the nations will agree that the United Nations has a role to play in peace-keeping. Therefore, we do not expect that other nations will try to renegotiate their degree of contribution. We hope a domino effect will not happen.

ROWE: General, we've recently seen the end of the Somalia operation, a very costly operation, and one in which approximately a hundred and twenty peace-keepers were killed. This has left the UN and the Member States feeling somewhat at a crossroads: On one hand, people are saying they don't want to launch another Somalia-style operation, but on the other hand, there seems to be a lot of confusion as to what kind of operations the UN can participate in. How do you and your Department plan now, amidst all this confusion?

EISELE: Well, allow me a remark vis-à-vis Somalia. We consider Somalia, especially the withdrawal, a real masterpiece of organization and achievement. We have recovered up to $200 million of equipment, UN-owned and contingent-owned equipment. We did not take any casualties, though the withdrawal, under the cover of a US-Italian-led fleet, did not happen in a benign environment. And we think that the United Nations has set an example with this withdrawal operation because they have clearly shown to the world that, when the objective of a mission cannot be reached within a foreseeable time, the mission must be terminated. We are

not hanging in as in Cyprus, where we are, well, lost, one might say, for 30 years or so. Now we have, of course, tried to learn our lessons not only from Somalia but also from missions like Mozambique -- highly successful, Namibia, or others, and to apply these lessons in a planning process which allows us for the first time to state that we have developed a master plan for beginning operations -- UNAVEM, in Angola, for instance -- and that will most probably avoid most of the mistakes that we or the Member States together made in Somalia. We can, of course, state that one of the preconditions for any successful operation must be the consent of the warring factions or parties. That is not to be achieved by peace-keeping, but is a pre-condition for peace-keeping, I feel.

ROWE: You say you've learned a lot of lessons from Somalia; how would you apply these lessons to, say, the situation in the former Yugoslavia, in Bosnia in particular? As you know, all sides are re-arming and repositioning themselves for what some fear could be another round of intense fighting. How do you view the future of the Bosnia and Yugoslavia operation?

EISELE: Well, UNPROFOR is an operation which has already begun. So we can only try to enhance the situation, we cannot start from zero to make it a better operation. And we think, with hindsight, that in the very beginning it was probably a mistake to go in the way the United Nations and other organizations went in. However, now that we are in that country, withdrawal would create an even more unfavourable situation; therefore, I'm afraid we have to insist that we stay in for the foreseeable future, to avoid the recurrence of open hostilities.

ROWE: Well, if I may follow up, though, what about the lesson of Somalia, that you can't stay forever? If the parties on the ground don't want you there, if they persist in fighting, you can't impose a peace. You're not imposing the peace in Bosnia. Why not pull out?

EISELE: That is certainly true, we cannot impose a peace. Therefore, we are hoping that by interpositioning Blue Helmets we may, after an agreement for the cessation of hostilities, create an atmosphere in which consent can grow and mutual confidence can develop, thus creating the preconditions for a withdrawal, because we want to avoid a withdrawal that is forced upon us or which would result in the opening up of new hostilities.

LITTLEJOHNS: What about the risks that are involved in withdrawal? I think the Secretary-General said in Vienna recently that it might take four to six months to withdraw the UN protection force, UNPROFOR, from Yugoslavia, if it was forced to do that. And of course it would be extremely dangerous. And he also mentioned that it might be as costly as the whole peace-keeping operation itself had been. What kind of contingency plans are you preparing for that possibility?

EISELE: A withdrawal is certainly a costly operation. It is a very complicated operation --

LITTLEJOHNS: And very risky.

EISELE: Risky only if it is not being carried out in a benign environment. In a hostile environment, we would certainly face a very difficult situation. Even in a benign environment, it is an organization and an operation which require a lot of preparation and expertise on the ground, from the driver of an armoured personnel carrier to the manager who has to withdraw the equipment that is owned by the United Nations and which will have to be recovered. And I think the assumption that it would take three to four months is certainly very realistic. On the other hand, Somalia has shown that we are capable of organizing such a multinational undertaking, and I am confident if this was to happen in a benign environment we would be seen as doing that successfully. If hostilities break out, any prediction is as good as mine, and I would just hope that the good Lord prevents that from happening.

TATE: Back in Somalia, I wanted to ask, given the type of looting that occurs in Somalia, last year $3.9 million was stolen. Why was the security so lax, with that large amount of money?

EISELE: Well, you're referring to one single incident, to which I cannot refer due to ignorance. I do not know what actually caused this one theft. But with the looting, I would say that was almost a, quotation marks, "controlled looting". We did not leave any valuables behind that we would have wished to have recovered. So we left barracks behind, which it wouldn't have made sense to take down and ship somewhere else, because by pulling them down and putting them up again we would have destroyed them. So leaving them in place was the easiest solution, and that the people on the spot did not use them as they were but destroyed them by looting, well, that is up to them.

TATE: But you don't know anything about the money that was stolen last year?

EISELE: No. No. Unfortunately. I wish I had it! [LAUGHTER]

LITTLEJOHNS: So the pictures we saw in the newspapers of the looting that was going on in Mogadishu and various other places in Somalia was a bit misleading, because you couldn't care less whether they took it or not, is that what you're saying?

EISELE: That is correct.

ROWE: General, last year we witnessed the saga of the 50 armoured personnel carriers that were supposed to be sent to Rwanda. They were supposed to help peace-keepers who would then be part of that group to help impose some kind of peace in Rwanda. However, we witnessed, for a period of months, the non-arrival of these armoured personnel carriers, carriers that had been leased from the US. My question to us is can you avoid these kinds of problems in the future? What have you done, what steps have you taken so that you can have your equipment ready, in place, and be able to deliver that to any hotspot in the world?

LITTLEJOHNS: General, before you answer, this is World Chronicle, and our guest is Lieutenant General Manfred Eisele, Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Support in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

EISELE: Thank you for your question. It's an easy question, but a complicated answer, I am afraid. I cannot guarantee that we can deliver to any trouble spot in the world in no time. We can, however, organize our things at home as best we can. That is, we can improve our database so that we can quickly identify a willing contractor capable of transporting, let's say, your 50 APCs from A to B in any given country. However, there are a lot of places on this globe where these contractors are not available or are not willing to deliver, or, if they are willing, at a cost not acceptable to the United Nations. I'm afraid, under these circumstances, we are not able to be seen as the troubleshooter. Number one, we are not a national army, we are not in possession of, let's say, large aircraft that could carry these things. Therefore, we will always move more slowly than, let's say, the United States if they go it alone.

TATE: But what steps are you taking to speed up that process? And do you have some kind of reserves for equipment?

EISELE: To start with the second part of your question, yes, we do. There is, I think, considerable improvement. We have developed a UN depot in Brindisi, in Italy, in which we store those pieces of equipment that we have recovered from terminated missions. And now we have to provide start-up phases for new missions with second- and third-hand cars. Not all peace-keepers love that, because they recall that, in the past, whenever United Nations missions started, they were entitled to a new car. Now they have to live with, as I said, a third-hand car. And this also holds true for communication signals equipment and other things, like shelter for the troops, and so on. So we are also saving money, of course. And we have increased the reliance on our UN-operated database, which allows us to quickly identify equipment wherever it is. Can we ship equipment from, let's say, Mozambique into Haiti, or do we go into Brindisi because it is in better shape there or more easily at hand? Plus, we have contracted a number of firms that provide us with rather cost effective services: for instance, to hire ships to transport equipment from A to B, and so on. Not to be in the hands of, well, in quotes, "lousy contractors", who bid cheap, get the orders, and then don't deliver, and we are left with all the criticism from around the world --

LITTLEJOHNS: Does that often happen?

EISELE: It happened.

LITTLEJOHNS: What precisely occurs? The Security Council, we'll say, adopts a resolution to mount a peace-keeping operation in country X, with the consent of the government of country X. What does General Eisele do in response to that resolution of the

Security Council? Do you start calling around the world to put the troops together and to get the ships and the planes to take them to their destination? What do you do?

EISELE: Generally speaking, you have described the situation properly. It is not me as a person, the United Nations will call on all Member States, describe their needs and invite bids. And, as I have indicated, in most recent --

LITTLEJOHNS: When you say "invite" bids, you mean offers of troops?

EISELE: Yes. For instance, we will identify for any given mission for your country X, we need, for instance, a logistics unit for the start-up phase, we need engineer units to clear the roads into the deployment positions for the infantry units, we then need, let's say, five infantry units, regimental size, clearly described, and we will need experts for demining. We will probably also need a helicopter unit. And we will then ask the nations "Who of you can deliver" -- a field hospital, I should not forget, and communications equipment. And that's about it. And then nations--

LITTLEJOHNS: This must surely take a long time to put together, doesn't it?

EISELE: Well, actually, nations are also monitoring the development world-wide. They are the Member States who vote either in the General Assembly or in the Security Council, and so by discussing these topics they have already warned their general staffs at home, and then they can deliver rather quickly. And then one nation may say, okay, we can provide you with a mechanized infantry regiment, but we do not have armoured personnel carriers for them. Then we will most probably turn the offer down and wait for another nation that has infantry with armoured personnel carriers, because we know that soldiers who are ill-equipped are usually also ill-trained, and we'd prefer well-trained soldiers to deliver what the United Nations needs. And I may add perhaps one thing: Increasingly, we are also recruiting civilian policemen, because these civilian policemen in many missions are playing a vital role in establishing judicial and legal systems, like the policemen on the beat on the roads of a city, who are also creating an atmosphere of confidence in which the national police can be re-established, re-created. And we are then receiving offers, not of 1,000 civilian policemen, because you don't have them in big quantities, like armed forces, but you get five policemen from country A and 20 policemen from country B, and you will then combine them into one civilian police force.

TATE: But does all this bidding take place before the Security Council mandates an operation? Because you have bidding for troops, and then you have bidding for equipment. I mean, do you have it ready to go once the Security Council passes a resolution?

EISELE: The pre-requisite for any decision to go is the resolution by the Security Council. But we would start with our preparation for a mission during the discussions in the Security Council. The decision of the Security Council also creates the prerequisite for the

budget, the funding process, which takes very long and does not quite live up to the standards that we would wish.

ROWE: General, can you step back and give us the big picture of how you see the future of -- you know, you just described how efficient the UN was in withdrawing from Somalia; there have been complaints that this whole peace-keeping exercise we've seen in the last few years is far too costly. Are we now going to be seeing a winding-down of operations? Or do you anticipate more operations coming along? We have Burundi, which repeatedly is cited as a country which could explode into ethnic violence, and countries are not willing to go in there. What is the trend, in your view?

EISELE: Well, the United Nations, as an organization steered by its Charter, is certainly what the Member States want it to be. And so it is rather for the Member States to answer your question. Nevertheless, I think that because we have been quite successful in a number of missions, like Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, not unsuccessful in, for instance, the upcoming mission in Haiti, and also partially successful in the much-criticized Somalia, where at least we were successful in stopping starvation, there is a market, I would say, for Blue Helmet operations also elsewhere. And considering the cost, I think it is prudent to state that for a single nation, the cost of Blue Helmet operations is minimal. The whole amount of the peace-keeping budget of the United Nations for 1994 amounts to only half a per cent of the United States defence budget. And comparing the positive results, I would say that is really a good bargain, and it is always more expensive for any nation to go these operations alone. Therefore, I think there there will be a growing, or at least an equally high level of necessity for Blue Helmet operations in the future.

ROWE: Do you anticipate seeing any future operations in which Blue Helmets will be using force, as they did in Somalia? Or is that a thing of the past?

EISELE: I wouldn't exclude it. The Charter has that in it, in Chapter VII, and I think the Charter is a very wise paper. However, it would always be preferable to have the consent of warring factions or warring parties as the prerequisite for any Blue Helmet operation. And I would warn any politician or diplomat not to seek the easy way out by introducing the military. Military operations usually do not offer solutions that last. And as I feel responsible for all Blue Helmet soldiers around the world, and I do not want any of them to lose his life or her life, I would therefore always recommend that we stick to peaceful peace-keeping operations, without using force except in self defence.

LITTLEJOHNS: But it's becoming more and more the case that the United Nations has to intervene in situations where there's internal conflict, as was the case in Somalia and is the case now in Angola. What happens there? You still must have the agreement of the conflicting sides. Is that the criterion that the United Nations operates upon?

EISELE: Yes. That is certainly true. As I said, the warring sides, warring factions and so on, have to agree, and impartiality is one of the three basic principles of the United Nations when going into any mission area. And irrespective of whether the one side is the government and the other one side is the opposition, we need the consent of both to volunteer to go in.

LITTLEJOHNS: The United Nations has been accused of a lack of impartiality in the former Yugoslavia, so do you reject these charges?

EISELE: Yes, I do. I feel that it is the highest challenge for the Blue Helmet soldier on the ground to display this sense of impartiality, because with his heart he may immediately side with the underdog, but his head and his finger on the trigger must be kept cool and clear of any partiality, any siding. He must be seen to be neutral, and he will have to take all the blame for being neutral when the role of the aggressor can be so clearly identified.

LITTLEJOHNS: General Eisele, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**.

Our guest has been Lieutenant-General Manfred Eisele, Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Support in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. He was interviewed by Trevor Rowe of National Public Radio and Emiko Tate of NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation. I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle**.

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